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**PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS:
FOUNDATIONS FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPE**

RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDUM OF CESI

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 6 million individual members. Founded in 1990, CESI is a recognised European sectoral social partner and advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU.

The Presidium of CESI,

- Considering the shifting global economic landscape, which require Europe to reinforce its economic resilience and competitive position;
- Noting that increasing geopolitical tensions and military threats, including in the EU's imminent neighbourhood, require not only spending in more military autonomy in Europe – which includes sufficient military staff, equipment, facilities – but also further investments to make the EU more economically self-reliant;
- Recognising the notion of the recent Union for Skills initiative that Europe's competitiveness is built on its human capital and that investing in people is essential to sustain long-term economic resilience;
- Pointing out that the recent EU Competitiveness Compass, Clean Industrial Deal, Industrial Action Plan for the European automotive sector and European Steel and Metals Action Plan stress that economic security and industrial leadership depend on well-trained workforces;
- Acknowledging the findings of the Draghi Report on the Future of European Competitiveness of September 2024, which highlight that Europe must invest in human capital, public service quality and workforce resilience to maintain competitiveness globally;
- Recognising the conclusions of CESI's SynCrisis project, which demonstrate that public sector workforce shortages, declining labour protections and inefficient public services are direct threats to Europe's economic future;
- Taking note of the impacts of the policies pursued by the so-called US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the consequences of which have led to increased job insecurity, weakened public services, and reduced investment in social infrastructure, hence exacerbating inequalities and poverty;

- Recalling that OECD data confirms that countries with strong public services and social dialogue outperform others in long-term economic growth and resilience, and that in particular:
 - countries with strong social partnerships recover faster from economic shocks and recessions;
 - regions with higher public investment in infrastructure, digitalisation, and workforce training attract more private-sector investment and maintain long-term growth;
 - efficient public administration enhances firm-level productivity, particularly benefiting SMEs, which depend on reliable administrative and regulatory frameworks;
- Stressing therefore that public services and strong social partnerships are not burdens but essential economic assets, which drive higher productivity, innovation, and economic stability;

Resolves to:

Support a sustainable and balanced approach to competitiveness, by

1. ensuring sufficient funding for military security and autonomy in Europe, as a basis for economic development, growth and competitiveness;
2. enhancing competitiveness through reform, de-bureaucratisation and enhanced use of AI and ICT but rejecting it as a social deregulation and staff cutting agenda, and welcoming the notion of the Draghi Report that promoting competitiveness should not lead to using wage repression to lower relative costs;
3. reforming EU public procurement rules to
 - prioritise EU-made goods and services, supporting European industry;
 - better enable public administrations to run faster and simpler public procurement procedures; which must include clear EU level rules for binding social criteria for fair work in tender procedures;

Strengthen social dialogue as an integral component of an economic competitiveness strategies, by

4. demanding that European trade union and social partner umbrella organisations be fully integrated into EU economic governance and European Semester consultation mechanisms, ensuring that social dialogue co-shapes social, economic and competitiveness-related policies, involving the constructive voice and experiences of workforces;
5. calling for a dialogue with trade unions and social partners to prioritise:
 - an alignment of education and training systems with digital and green transition needs that will determine future needed knowledge, skills and AI- and ICT-related competences in labour markets based on equal opportunities and access;
 - lifelong learning and vocational upskilling, including in public services;

Position public services as a central pillar of the European competitiveness agenda, by

6. calling upon the EU and Member States to recognise well-equipped public services as essential infrastructure are vital to support thriving business environments; urging European policymakers to stress that investments especially in education, professional training, preventive healthcare and public employment services are central as preconditions for employable, skilled, healthy and resilient workforces and thus sustainable economic growth;
7. bringing forward public administration modernisation, including though an increased use of ICT and AI, streamlining processes including in the area of digitalisation to increase efficiency – but keeping personalised services on-site as a core component of an available and accessible public sector and ensuring that AI is deployed in socially balanced manners and boost productivity without replacing workers.