

Warsaw Declaration

For good industrial jobs in the European defence industry

Joint declaration of the trade unions organising workers in the defence industries

Brussels, 3 December 2024

Preamble

Faced with Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, European trade unions underline their solidarity with the Ukrainian people and strictly condemn Russia's aggression¹, and call on Russia to end its war immediately. We call for the primacy of diplomacy and international law, and firmly believe that the current war notwithstanding, global and binding disarmament initiatives, are decisive for a peaceful and democratic future based on multilateralism for all.

In a significant break with previous policies not to allow weapon exports to active war zones, several European countries have decided to send weapons to Ukraine. This invasion, and Ukraine's request for military support, has highlighted the decades-long lack of investment in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and its workforce. This is something trade unions have been highlighting for years, including skills shortages, the ageing workforce, and issues attracting new workers. This, paired with low investments in industrial sites, has hampered the industry's ability to ramp up and meet the EU's ammunition targets for Ukraine, with unfair pressure being put on defence workers who demand an EU defence industrial policy which invests in workers and ensures good quality jobs for all.

Increased EU Focus on Defence

The issue of ensuring economic and military security in a context of rising threats and challenges is increasingly at the centre of the discussions at European and national levels.

As a reaction to the war in Ukraine, the EU has discovered concrete issues with the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), including fragmentation and a lack of standardisation. As such, the first [European Defence Industrial Strategy \(EDIS\)](#) was published in 2023 with an accompanying [European Defence Industry Programme \(EDIP\)](#) which is still in negotiation between the EU institutions.

¹ https://news.industrialall-europe.eu/documents/upload/2022/7/637938416888707024_radeUnions4Peace-iAStatementWarUkraine-EN.pdf

The defence sector was also highlighted in the recent [Draghi Report on EU competitiveness](#), which includes a list of ten concrete proposals being put to the new EU policy makers, including increased funding, coordination, and development of a medium-term EU Defence Industrial Policy. Many of these proposals have been included in the Commission President's [Mission Letter to the Commissioner Delegate for Defence and Space](#).

IndustriAll Europe recognises the EU's desire to have a stronger geopolitical role, including in applying Russian sanctions, as well as its efforts to provide additional defence services and products to Ukraine. However, defence policy remains an issue of national sovereignty, and EU initiatives such as EDIS or EDIP, aimed at reinforcing intergovernmental cooperation, must take into account EU versus Member States' competences, as well as national defence capabilities and needs. The important role of NATO for many EU Member States must also be noted.

Trade unions stress that any EU initiatives on defence or security should not come at the expense of social progress, workers' rights and working conditions. There must be a guarantee that in any circumstances, resources for initiatives on defence or security do not come from a reduction of resources for social objectives. Strong social conditionalities must apply to funding for the defence sector as for any other sector in receipt of public funds.

The role of workers in the defence sector

During these high-level EU discussions on the future of the EU defence sector, industriAll Europe reminds EU policy makers and defence companies of the importance of the workers themselves. [The EU's Act in Support of Ammunition Production \(ASAP\)](#) is a case in point, with industriAll Europe and trade unions having to fight² to remove the proposal of Member States to not respect the EU Working Time Directive. The idea of forcing workers to work longer hours is unacceptable, and it is the responsibility of companies and Member States to ensure that there is a sufficiently skilled workforce to meet demand. **Workers' rights must be protected**, including high occupational health and safety standards, both physical and psychosocial, especially in times of high demand.

Without workers there is no EU defence industry, and with around 500,000 jobs linked to the defence industry, we want to ensure that these are good quality and decent jobs. Investment in the EDTIB is key, but investment in people, including reskilling, upskilling and attracting and training new workers, is also essential. The defence sector is a highly skilled sector with well-paid jobs, and it is not possible to upscale production tomorrow. Upscaling requires time and investment, including in hiring and properly training new workers. **Social dialogue is vital in this regard, and social partners must work together to map and anticipate changes in the defence sector to ensure that sites and workforces are prepared.**

With increase in demand for defence products and services, and proposals to increase EU targets and funding for those made in Europe, industriAll Europe insists on **fair investment across Europe** to ensure that all regions benefit and that current jobs are safeguarded and new ones created in all European

² <https://news.industrialall-europe.eu/Article/914>

regions, with the possibility of cooperation with Ukraine to be examined. As the defence manufacturing sector is driven by defence policy and spending, special attention needs to be given to employment security, and all efforts must be made to protect jobs, including investing in dual-use production when appropriate.

With calls for a medium-term defence industrial policy and a White Paper on the future of European Defence in the first 100 days of the new European Commission, **industriAll Europe calls for a worker-centred defence industrial strategy that ensures good industrial jobs for all.**

The European trade unions in the defence industries agree on the following principles and put forward these demands:

- Concrete **long-term investment in the European defence sector** from research and development, state of the art production facilities, to ensuring highly skilled and competent workforces.
- **Fair investment across Europe** to ensure that all regions benefit and that current jobs are safeguarded and new ones created in all European regions, with the possibility of cooperation with Ukraine to be examined.
- Public resources for initiatives on defence or security must **not be at the expense of resources for social objectives.**
- All stakeholders, including trade unions, to work together towards a **establishing a strong European Defence Technological and Industrial Base** to overcome the current investment gaps and increase procurement of defence products and services made in Europe.
- **Defence companies to invest** in their sites and their workers, and for **social conditionalities to be attached to any public funding.**
- **Involve trade unions in monitoring company investment plans**, respecting quality social dialogue, workers' rights to information and consultation and collective agreements.
- **Full respect of collective bargaining and workers' rights** including the EU Working Time Directive. EU targets are not an excuse for forced overtime.
- Complete adherence to **high occupational health and safety standards**, including psychosocial risks.
- **Detailed analysis and mapping to be conducted** between the social partners and policy makers on future production to ensure that both sites and workforces are fully prepared.
- A **Just Transition** for all workers and regions with regard to the green and digital transitions.
- **Fair distribution of EU funds** to ensure that all defence-producing regions benefit and that no workers are left behind.
- Social partners to investigate the possibility of the **dual-use approach** to help keep workers in work when dealing with the cyclical nature of the defence sector.
- **An ambitious skills strategy for the defence industry**, including anticipation of change, investment in reskilling and upskilling, and increased efforts to attract new young workers for the future.
- **Good quality industrial jobs** for all defence workers across Europe.