ZBORNICA ZA RAZVOJ SLOVENSKEGA ZASEBNEGA VAROVANJA

Joint Statement
on the Slovenian EU Council Presidency
Together for a sustainable recovery and resilient Europe

Brussels / Ljubljana, 22 July, 2021

With this Statement, the *Confederation of European Security Services* (*CoESS*) and the *Slovenian Chamber of Private Security* (*ZRSZV*) congratulate Slovenia on the beginning of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council and wish the responsible officials every success in building a stronger and more resilient European Union.

As part of the Presidency Trio with Germany and Portugal, Slovenia will have high responsibilities for the sustainable and successful recovery of European economies and societies from the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, we highlight that close coordination and unity among EU Member States on the re-opening of the European economy, guarantee of free movement and vaccination, are key.

Furthermore, the Slovenian Presidency will be responsible for building consensus in the EU Council on a large number of dossiers that will have a considerable impact on the future resilience of our economies and societies - such as the Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities. The private security industry, represented by CoESS at EU-level and ZRSZV in Slovenia, stands ready to support the Slovenian Presidency in this effort.

Guaranteeing a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

In order to guarantee a recovery that is sustainable for society, businesses and workers, we stress that cooperation with Social Partners, both at cross-sectoral and sectoral level, is key and provide the following recommendations from our sector:

- Effective **EU coordination and unity on the guarantee of free movement**, but also on the roll-out of vaccination campaigns and economic recovery is crucial.
- We underline the continued relevance of the European Instrument for **temporary Support to mitigate employment risks in an Emergency (SURE)**, particularly in sectors like private security services, which suffer from chronic labour shortage. The first preliminary assessment report of the European Commission on SURE confirms the highly positive impact of the instrument.

- In the **economic recovery**, it is important to pay particular attention to the sectors most affected by the crisis, including transport and tourism, on which entire business eco-systems depend. We gladly note that the Slovenian Presidency is planning to do so.
- For a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, it is ever more important that EU Member States effectively enforce the **EU Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU** and the **Late Payment Directive 2011/7/EU**. We therefore also count on the Slovenian Presidency to pro-actively promote among EU Member State authorities and public procurers the recent European Commission Communication "***Buying Social - a guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement***" (*C(2021) 3573 final*).

Strengthening Resilience of European economies

The Slovenian Presidency will have to build consensus on a large range of files that will contribute to make our economies and societies more resilient against the many drivers of change ahead - such as demographic change and labour shortages, digitalisation, and emerging security challenges. For the ongoing negotiations in the EU Council, we provide the following recommendations:

- We remind EU Member States that the **full respect of Social Partner autonomy** must at all times be guaranteed. We count on the Slovenian Presidency to serve as a guardian of Social Partner autonomy in ongoing negotiations on the European Commission's proposals for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages and on Pay Transparency.
- We have particularly severe concerns that the European Commission's Proposal for a **Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages** includes provisions that severely intervene in Collective Bargaining and Social Partner autonomy. In May 2021, we joined a call by 10 EU sectoral employer groups representing over 33 million companies with nearly 114 million employees, urging the EU Institutions to reconsider their approach on this matter, including the choice of the Directive as an instrument, and to guarantee that the principle of Social Partner autonomy enshrined in the EU Treaties is fully respected. We trust that the concerns of European employers will be heard in the EU Council.
- We gladly note that the Slovenian Presidency aims to strengthen the capacity, sustainability and resilience of Critical Infrastructure of the EU, and to devote particular attention to the **Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities**. We believe that the European Commission's proposal is a very valuable contribution to the resilience of European infrastructure. Still, it shows serious shortcomings concerning coherence with the proposal for a NIS Directive 2 when it comes to the sectoral scope and quality control of security service providers. It also needs to strongly promote European Standards to help operators of Critical Entities comply with the important provisions of the legal proposal. Cybersecurity and physical security are interdependent and need to be addressed as a whole. In this context, we believe that the draft report of the European Parliament's LIBE Committee is a very useful inspiration for

ongoing negotiations in the European Council - in particular draft amendments in Articles 3 to 6 on the resilience strategy and identification of Critical Entities; Article 11 on resilience measures of Critical Entities; and the introduction of a new Article on Standards, similar to Article 22 in NIS Directive 2. CoESS has already shared two respective evaluations with the Slovenian Presidency ahead of this Statement.

- We welcome that the Slovenian Presidency gives "*paramount importance*" to the European Commission's proposal for a **European Artificial Intelligence Act** in the context of digital transformation, and look forward to the Presidency's high-level conference on Artificial Intelligence. We strongly support the objectives of the proposal, but believe that the EU Council should address shortcomings in the text, particularly concerning the guarantee of important human oversight provisions and user liability.
- We note with interest that the Slovenian Presidency aims to work on the matter of **standardisation**. CoESS is very active in European standardisation within CEN, in particular CEN Technical Committee (TC) 439 on "Private Security Services", but also other TCs within CENELEC and ISO, and is of course available to share expertise in the field.

CoESS and ZRSZV count on the Slovenian EU Council Presidency at a crucial moment in which EU Member States need to be united in the historic efforts for European recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in the guarantee of Social Partner autonomy and effective resilience of our economies and Critical Infrastructure. Both associations stand ready to offer their expertise to foster a resilient Union.

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About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 22 countries in Europe and representing 2 million guards, over 45,000 companies and generating a turnover of over €40M. The private security services provide a wide range of services, both for private and public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure facilities to public spaces and government and EU institutions buildings. CoESS is active in European Sectoral Social Dialogue with UNI Europa and numerous EU Expert Groups, including the EU Operators Forum for the Protection of Public Spaces.

About ZRSZV

The Chamber for Development of Slovenian Private Security - ZRSZV performs as the professional interest association of private security in Slovenia and is representative by the fact that it is the only Chamber in this field and representing more than 90% of the included licence holders.
ZRSZV is a professional economic interest association, established on the basis of the law, which links legal and natural persons in the field of private security and acts as independent, voluntary and non-profit members association, on the basis of an optional membership, throughout the territory of the Republic of Slovenia.

For more information

May 2021 - Joint Statement - EU Minimum Wage lacks legal basis

March 2021 - CoESS Position Paper - The European Commission Proposal for a Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities

January 2021 - CoESS Statement - the EU Counterterrorism Agenda

January 2021 - CoESS Position Paper - The European Commission's Proposal for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in Europe

October 2020 - CoESS White Paper - The New Normal 2.0: Private Security and COVID-19 in Europe

June 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European Approach